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**Gesture in poetry, movement and music: Approaching the total artwork through Sufism in *Say I am You* and *Deniz Küstü* (The Sea-Crossed Fisherman)**

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**Abstract**

*In this article I speak about my experience of the connective thread of the gesture, and how metaphors of gesture across disciplines underpin relationships between music, poetry and dance. I explore the notion that, if there is a unifying force in the creation of Art and uncovering of Consciousness, it lies in some kind of Ur-gesture – a gesture that exists before translation into a certain medium – behind the forms a craftsman of music, dance or words of obligation ‘reduces it’ to. Further, I compare Rumi’s ideas on sema to those behind Whitehouse’s notion of Authentic Movement, and justify my approach to the staging of Rumi and sema in the opera Say I am You: as though the Mevlevi sema formal ritual had never been codified. Finally, I explore ideas surrounding Ur-gesture in interview with the foremost modern dance choreographer in Turkey today, Zeynep Tanbay, while probing her process of choreographing Deniz Küstü, my second opera.*

**Keywords**

dance

gesture

contemporary opera

choreography

## Authentic Movement

Rumi

### *Ur-gesture*

They say he recited while whirling. The music was in a blacksmith's hammer (Schimmel 2001), a nearby instrument – or perhaps in his mind alone.

In this article, I would like to speak about creative reflection, about my experience of the connective thread of the gesture throughout my life's creative work, and how metaphors of gesture across disciplines underpin relationships between poetry, music and dance. As a composer who went through an intensive phase, as a non-dancer, of improvising dances to my music before writing the music down, in my mature work I have always had a strong sense of movement, and a correspondingly strong desire to traverse artistic disciplines in collaboration. Further to the point, in moments of the most heightened creativity, I am under the distinct impression that, if there is an essence to what we as artists are here to communicate – that essence or meaning lies somehow in some kind of *Ur-gesture*. By *Ur-gesture* I mean a gesture that exists in the inner space of a human being before translation into a certain medium – behind the subsequent form which the crafters of music, dance or words then reduce this gesture to. Further, that this translation into a medium is simultaneously, of necessity to some degree a reduction, a limitation. It cannot be as complete as the *Ur-gesture*. Yet, when successful translation is made, we nevertheless feel such force of the inner reality that produced this impetus to form, that we then usually grope for words like 'integrity' or 'authenticity' to describe the spirit that produced such an experience in a

spectator or listener. Speaking less from reference and more from experience, creative artists of whatever stripe can, in the best moments, converse with a place, ‘on the cusp of one’s most intimate sensibility’ (Truitt 1982) where creative forms and essence are one; in a more abstract – and, for the true artist – more vivid plane of meaning where the work’s potential exists, but has not yet been born. From which the artisan then sculpts away, inevitably, inexpressible parts of the essence that cannot be concretized into a particular medium in the attempt to bring the *Ur-gesture* into manifest state – for example into music, the medium of time and pitches and harmonies – in order to arrive at something that might pass as and be performable as music. It is also this place behind music where I would like my music’s performance to point a listener, and also where, ideally, I would like a choreographer and a theatre director to also be listening for. I see it as the wellspring not only of creativity, but of Being. Coming from the same place (call it the ocean of *Ur-gestures*) movement, music, poetry and any other art, thus defined, can easily converse with one another, if only a perceiver’s soul has been turned into an empty enough vessel to apprehend.

**Please insert photo: Figure 1:** *Deniz Küstü, (The Sea-Crossed Fisherman)*, June 11, 2016, Istanbul. copyright Michael Ellison. Before rehearsal. Photo: Tony Judge.

### ***Definitions***

In this article I use the term *gesture* not strictly in the sense of bodily movement in space, as it is most commonly used when speaking of dance. Though its meaning

through physical movement is important, and indeed the most concrete and practical use of the term, as well as the most relevant perhaps in a dancer's daily work, I also find less concrete, more metaphorical use of the word *gesture* highly valuable in the context of other art forms.

The gesture of a line painted by a brush, or the way a line or shape 'moves' across a canvas is one analogy. In music, the contour created by a combination of rhythm, pitch height and dynamics to form a musical line, is another. For example, I have always thought that Mozart was one composer capable of the most sublime gesture from early in his career – a virtue Beethoven learned only in the rarefied music of his last years. 'Gesture' in poetry is remarkably similar to that in music: a perception of the flow of words in their rhythm, cadences and relative pitch height with dynamics through time. Many artists accept such metaphorical connections across art forms and the senses as inherently self-evident. Messiaen famously 'heard' the colours of notes and chords (synaesthesia) – a deeply experienced, if unprovable correspondence. I myself have more often had the more common experience of 'hearing' music when looking intently at a painting and feeling its 'flow', with musical gestures that come to mind influenced by paths in which the eyes follow shapes and colours across canvas.

The figurative metaphor of gesture in music is found in the common description of a melody's moving 'up' or 'down'. Of course technically a melody does no such thing – higher pitches simply have a more rapid rate of the vibration of sound waves through the air, lower pitches a slower rate. Yet most (not all) musical cultures in the world seem to agree that faster frequencies are 'higher'. Adding nuance to this basic sense of direction, we might propose the tension and release in harmony as analogous

to muscle contractions and releases in movement (is this part of what a good conductor is showing?) Or we can propose that competing colours on a canvas are then brought into harmony another area of the painting through the introduction of some mediating element.

But, as the all-important second step, having defined the sense of gesture as transferable across art forms, the fundamental gesture I will be speaking about here comes prior to paint on canvas, lips to reed, foot on floor, print on page. It is the gesture existing before artistic creation, the energy that yearns to break out into expression into some medium – whatever that medium might be.

Hence my carefully chosen addition of the prefix ‘Ur-’. Aside from its being identified with one of the first cities in civilization in ancient Mesopotamia, ‘Ur’, used as a prefix, denotes the original, primitive unvarnished form of something. For example, the word *Urtext* denotes a manuscript in (generally earlier) music still in the state exactly as the composer first wrote it, with no further interpretation or editing added. Most pianists and violinists play Bach from editions that contain subsequently added various indications of execution and interpretation. An *Urtext* dispenses with these editorial marks, giving the notation exactly as the composer wrote it into manuscript. It is the original that comes before any editing. In Turkish there is a remarkably similar sounding prefix, ‘Öz’, meaning ‘essence’ or ‘original’ (Öztürk=original Turk). We find the *ur-* prefix in other musical German words as well, for example in Heinrich Schenker’s idea of *Ursatz*, or fundamental structure. By this, the musical thinker who discovered the existence of structural levels, meant the most basic, skeletal frame of the music hidden beneath its surface ‘composing-out’. *Ursatz*

is the primal form that comes before manifestation (and perhaps also a sense of basic shape that remains in the mind of the listener) giving a broader meaning to all details. Just as through the lens of an original manuscript all subsequent editions appear as interpretations or a kind of translation of the original in *Urtext*, so it is with *Ur-gesture*. By *Ur-gesture* I mean the source of impetus, the life-feeling, even, that produces a shape apprehended by the artist on an entirely inner plane. Whether that is then translated into the language of music, of painting, movement or words, is largely dependent on what this artist is most familiar with doing. Some composers (like Schoenberg) do paint. Some dancers do create music themselves. But is not the experience of everyone who attempts to express through more than one medium very quickly to learn the limitations of these various media?

There was one *Ur-gesture* in my ‘Overture to Henry V’, composed through movement in 1992 as I will presently describe, that terrified me. What came from this inner place felt very much on the edge of music for me at the time, barely translatable into any notes and sounds at all. Yet its reality on the Unseen plane was more palpable than I could possibly say, and finding symbols and sounds to express this gesture was a wringing out of my own gut (Ellison 1992). Twenty years later, in *Say I am You*, the slow section of Tableau 7 – itself an essay in motion and gesture – finds its purest gestural form in its pulsating slow section: practically only a breath sensation that turns into tones:

*[y]ou are a sudden resurrection, an endless bliss [...].* (Ellison 2012)

Yet there is also something very different here in the context of opera, as this vocally produced gesture has gone through several translations, beginning first as a Mevlâna *ghazel* in the thirteenth century, subsequently translated into English in the twentieth by Nader Khalili, whose manifestation in music in the twenty-first finally comes from pronouncing those translated words on an inner plane and then turning those translated pulsations and meaning into music. This is not *Ur-gesture* at the same level of nearness to its first impulse these lines in the original Persian, or as a piece of instrumental music, where there is no translation of medium necessary except into music directly. What we sense, however, is that a feeling *reduced* into a certain medium can still be so powerful that it still carries a large amount of the original feeling with it: it is one mark of the profound artist that Mevlâna was that his work can stand innumerable translations and still retain a profound meaning. Not because of his training – though he had this in abundance – but because of his access to an inexhaustible source. It is here that connections between artistic creation and Sufism become evident and multiply – and also where creative impulses from different eras converge.

The reality of *Ur-gesture*, though not actually formulated into words at the time, was in my mind when I was first discovering the vastness of Rumi's poetry. My way of relating to Mevlâna was by relating it to what I was feeling in myself, often then in relation to the music creation inspired by it. That movement and dance facilitated this is perhaps not surprising, given the media used both by Mevlâna himself and in later Mevlevi ritual. And what I so loved about Rumi's thoughts was that he was speaking directly about *experience* that either related to or further inspired spiritual exploration or expression of my own. It was more a statement of how to experience the divine



than a defining of what the divine was supposed to be – and indeed there was no one defining, no ‘one religion’. Many of Rumi’s lines contain images clearly pointing to intense inner listening:

[t]he breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you. (Barks and Moyne 1984)

[m]aybe you don’t hear that [inner] tambourine, or the tree leaves clapping time.

(Barks and Moyne 1984)

In Mevlâna’s words, the sense of a mystic listening to and waiting for his Beloved I related intensely to my own creating self-listening to music from within. Though I would go on to study Mevlâna and Sufism more formally, it was this spark and connection that was originally at and remains at the centre of my interest in Mevlâna’s thought.

I had not always composed music this way – that is by beginning with an intense ‘listening within’, which also meant to break with anything I had written before. Yet when I started doing this, in my late conservatory years, the results corresponded with the emergence of what musicians would call my ‘compositional voice’. I was fortunate to have mentors who helped push me over the edge, ‘into the ocean’, as it were, who I appreciate for imbuing an attitude that encouraged inner listening. It was, then, especially Rumi, C. G. Jung and my teachers Pandit Pran Nath and Allaudin Mathieu (the latter two immersed in a Sufism they rarely discussed directly), who prepared me to be able to discover processes of creating movement out of pure feeling

entirely on my own. To have that listening within, whilst also observing the body being moved by that inner listening added another layer. Once I began going on this very exciting, unmarked path, numinosity composition increased, even to the point at times giving a satisfaction to longing so complete, that I almost felt as Yeats once put it, that in those moments ‘I was blessed, and could bless’ ([1933] 2011).

Having described the impulse and sense of importance attached to the idea, I will now describe how *Ur-gesture*, has manifested in my two operas, first in *Say I am You*, which takes as its subject thirteenth century poet and mystic Mevlâna Jelaluddin Rumi (Ellison 2012), and second with the ostensibly more material, environmentally concerned *Deniz Küstü* (literally [...] *And the Sea Was Cross*), which, unlike *Say I am You*, was fully staged, with choreography (Ellison and Jones 2016). I will then relate my own creative discoveries as described above to the remarkable work of Mary Starks Whitehouse and the Authentic Movement school, whose Jungian approach through movement I probe comparatively to further examine why my own modest, yet sincere exploration of movement was so pivotal in opening up my creativity as a composer. While no doubt this will certainly not apply to many other valid types of creative process – I actually do not know of anyone with a composing process like mine – I hope my corresponding references from Rumi to Whitehouse provide corroboration and insights into process for a certain approach to creativity and authenticity that is intent on *listening* within for solutions to important artistic problems, rather than only constructing or juxtaposing known materials or using previous models within the chosen medium – also valid but not my subject in this article. The common feeling amongst artists who do not deny the idea of inspiration (note that word’s connection to breath), is that, when things are going well, the work

‘writes itself’. Or, as in the case of Whitehouse and her often amateur practitioners, the choreography ‘dances itself’ (1999a, p. 49).

Such an idea also brings to mind one notion of the late Louis Krasner, my beloved mentor in chamber music at the New England Conservatory – the violinist who had commissioned and premiered Alban Berg’s Violin Concerto in 1935: ‘[i]t is so beautiful you can’t play it’, Krasner said about a certain passage in Schubert, to the bewilderment of his charges, sitting there holding their violins (1991). Krasner saw right through the score, to the *Idea* or *Ur-gesture* behind. Looked at in this way, the score (whose idea Krasner was already saying was more beautiful than the ‘actual’ sounding music) was the closest representation of the hidden *Ur-gesture*. Of course, looked at another way, the score is only a necessary detour, as, after all, music is meant to be heard, not read. But what about what comes even before music, or movement?

Any creative process this searching involves an intensive listening within. Interestingly, the word *sema*, the word used to describe what would later become the ritual of Mevlevi whirling, actually means *listening* (Chittick 2004). And whether this listening is to the divine (Rumi), to the Self through active imagination (Jung) or to the Body (Whitehouse) – if indeed these three are ultimately separable at all, which is debatable if ultimately unanswerable – the act of *listening* is central to all three endeavours. Moreover, there is not necessarily any hierarchy to these sources: all connect to the unconscious, including of the collective kind, through whose portals we are already in realms that can be considered divine. Deborah Hay points out that

‘[t]he label “sacred dancing” is redundant. Dancing is always and already sacred in the way that it conjoins body and consciousness’ (Hay and Foster 2000).

### ***In the beginning was not the word***

In discussing ritual, Carl Gustav Jung said the gesture is the most archaic manifestation of culture and spiritual life. In the beginning was the symbolic gesture, not the word (Chodorow 1999; von Franz 1977: 78).

Whether von Franz means here something akin to *Ur-gesture* prior to the beginning of creation, the origins of culture or otherwise, such an assertion corroborates with the ‘numinous’ moment in my own experience: the unmistakable sense of a Reality before gesture which is then translated into a specific shape or medium. An *Ur-gesture* is probably inseparable from what might be called meaning itself, with the distinct sense of its existence in a place emanating from a tangibly felt reality. Within these epiphanies was an unmistakable sense that one of these nexus’ of meaning could alternatively be represented as (1) a shape (drawn), (2) a movement, (3) music; and as (4) notes and rhythms. Any number of other ways such as colours, flying shapes in space, even poetry. And what physical entity was assigned to convey these was also important (an arm, a thick brush, a double bass, etc.). But again, every single form of manifestation on its own terms would inevitably cut off aspects of the Reality. The simplest *Shape* is indeed far more primal than a musical score, as it takes many notes and rhythms to even create a sense of line in music equivalent to what a single brush stroke might express. But the sense that this brush could paint your soul, inspire a leap in the air, followed by a plunge and a 360-degree pirouette or, alternatively be

reduced into the medium of musical gesture formed by a specific combination of chromatic or diatonic notes and pitch heights, rhythms and dynamic shapes further pointed towards the limitations and idiosyncrasies – as well as occasionally benefits – of each *existing* medium. Bodies limit dancers. Notes and rhythms ever distract musicians like trees for the forest. Sculptors are limited by properties of their raw materials, painters, by a flat canvas, writers by words on paper and many of the above by the inability to move in multiple temporal directions. In theory, a true *Gesamtkunstwerk*<sup>1</sup> in the Wagnerian sense would be created by a super-artist who could realize implications of a single *Ur-gesture* in multiple media, in the way that I was sometimes, on a far more limited scale, finding physical shapes and musical gestures simultaneously, by one feeding off the other. Words, choreography, music, staging in space would all come out of the same *Ur-gesture*. Did Wagner actually do this? I do not think so – the timeline of his creation suggests strongly otherwise (and, of all things, words came first). Such unity may not be possible for any single creator, and would be even less achievable by a team of artists. It may not even be desirable, as it may partially be the tension between media and different creative personalities with individual's idiosyncratic way of working that keeps things alive in forms such as ballet or opera. That, so far, is my own preferred way.

Lines from Mevlâna's poetry support the idea of *Ur-gesture*, finding delight in a diversity of forms emanating from one source:

God's joy moves from unmarked box, to unmarked box, from cell to cell. Like rainwater down into flower beds, like roses up from ground. Now it looks like a plate of rice and fish, now a cliff covered with vines, now a horse being

saddled. It hides within these, till one day, it cracks them open. (Barks and Moyne 1984)

The bypassing of words and rationalizations of consciousness (both of which Rumi repeatedly warns about as elements that distract and blind the seeker) allows for a deeper penetration of Reality. This idea is consistent within most traditions of Sufism. One of the more fascinating aspects of Rumi's creativity is his embarrassment when using the medium of words. As poet Coleman Barks has remarked, '[m]any of Rumi's odes end with a disclaimer, sometimes an apology, that words are deceptive, even dangerously abstracted and conceptual' (Barks and Moyne 1984, p. xii).

Whitehouse's assertion corroborates this:

[i]n the beginning, there was not the word, but rather there was the symbolic action, a union of body and psyche. In the beginning, dance was the sacred language through which we communicated to the vast unknown. (1999b)

In the interview with our choreographer Zeynep Tanbay, excerpts of which follow at the end of this article, it was hard not to be struck by her assertion, 'I'm sorry, Michael, but movement comes before music', as she pointed out that babies move even inside the womb, and feel their own mothers' movements even before birth (Ellison and Tanbay 2017).

In the early days of composing my first orchestral work, I was discovering a path to my own core through movement that bypassed concepts or words. When I danced, my

legs and feet became the bass line and basic rhythm, swirling arms the melodies and interjections above, the torso, the pull of harmonic motions and accompanying gestures. If I was really assiduous I could even feel violas traversing across my middle. Other times, I would just walk around in the middle of the night, trying to perceive while moving around in some way, trying to *hear* this new piece, which felt very much like uncovering successive areas, successive layers of the unconscious. In the first instance, while at times I was creating a choreography to music I was working on already, mostly I was generating music and choreography together in the same moment, live. The two fed each other. In places where I did not know how the end of a phrase of music should go, it was movement that helped me solve them. If I did not know how to move, I simply listened to the music inside. But perhaps the most remarkable aspect is that then – and to this day – I feel as though this work opened vast domains of my mature musical style that had previously been inaccessible. At the time I considered the whole project to be concerned with energy, the unconscious, exploring archetypes, creating music more physically grounded (while still being able to soar to the sky) than it had ever been. I revelled in the soft earth and mud and leaves under my feet in the cold New England winter and spring. And my music was transformed, tapping into a huge energy whose dimensions I could actually barely control or apprehend. That the energy was there for the taking was the astonishing thing.

One other device that helped bridge the gap, from *Ur-gesture* through movement into notes, was a graphic depiction of the piece's form drawn completely in shapes. This looked more like graphic art or Kandinsky than a score: pencil in fanciful, yet representational shapes on the back of a large 11×17 sheet of paper. But it served as a

timeline of textures and gestures within. That single page, filled in over time, provided a ‘photo’ that constantly guided me back to the centre through the months-long process of writing my first orchestral piece down. And remarkably, I did not deviate from it even through to the end of the piece – those shapes, having been both danced and ‘heard’, worked. Here was a third, non-note, non-verbal aid. Years later, it was fascinating to see in a brief meeting with composer John Corigliano at the Juilliard School, that he had done the same thing, advocating making graphic depictions of the music, pre-score, for his students (2007). Some composers might call this ‘pre-compositional’. I would say it was half the work of the piece.

As mentioned earlier I had had no training as a dancer whatsoever – I could barely waltz, let alone ballroom dance or really anything even moderately coordinated with prescribed, memorized steps. I would not dance usually when others were around, and copied the gestures of no one. Yet the dance, full of different types of motions, feelings and music came simultaneously, one feeding the other, inseparable – each informing the other straight from the unconscious. As a creator, I had hit on something, and going back to this spring after its discovery often ended up inducing an exalted state of bliss. But there was actually a lot more downward than upward motion. At times this process seemed like working through knots of consciousness and sheer pain, especially at the beginning of each phase. As I moved through this piece, with its strong contrasts and charged rhythms, I began to understand a kind of joy of the pain of being alive, of pushing and expanding the edges of consciousness.

My moments of really apprehending the existence of *Ur-gesture*, it must be said, were rare, and relatively quiet ones. Where after a burst of creativity and motion, often



while simply walking around in reflection, but still ‘listening’ afterwards, usually in the dead quiet of night, suddenly an Inner entity behind it all was clearly perceivable. Only in those acutely heightened moments combining creativity and reflection was it possible to sense through layers of consciousness to the *Ur-gesture*: pre-sound, pre-movement, pre-shape on a page, pre-language, pre-feeling: a slice of numinous actuality.

### ***Authentic movement: Pathway to the self***

For Rumi (Mevlâna) the dance, together with music seems to have provided a place of intersection where he was both in fervent contact with the divine, and astoundingly creative. This divinely inspired creativity was not limited either to the experience of the *sema* or whirling itself, but included the tomes of poetry he recited while whirling (Lewis 2007). This attests to how important movement was for Mevlâna’s practice, and provides a fascinating example of a creative place he discovered that could be – to use a rather lacking, current term purposefully – inherently interdisciplinary. For Mevlâna, dance and movement seemed to lead to the transcendent function as nothing else could.

While one can puzzle over Mevlâna’s previously cited denial of words, and ultimately conclude that, after all, in the face of the divine Reality even divinely inspired words do not mean very much, what is also striking is that, even despite its being forbidden in many Islamic quarters, Mevlâna never felt it necessary to issue disclaimers about dance or *sema*.

[t]he samā' has become a window towards Thy rosegarden; the ears and hearts of the lovers peer through [...] We sigh, for this window has become a tremendous veil – but no! For this is a sweet veil – say nothing, oh, pure man [...]. (Chittick 1984)

w]hat is the samā'? A message from those hidden within the heart. The heart – the stranger – finds peace in their missive. (Chittick 1984)

Was movement, somehow, already a step closer to Truth for Mevlâna?

[w]e have danced much over the veils of this world – become nimble, oh friends, for the sake of the dance of that other world! [...] Dance everything other than Him under your feet! The samā' belongs to you and you belong to it. (Chittick 1984)

Two related ideas from Mary Starks Whitehouse illustrate why this might be:

‘[i]t occurred to me to ask what it is that man does when he dances, not only as an artist but as a man. He expresses that which cannot be put into words’ he gives voice to the ineffable, intangible meaning of being alive; he puts himself with forces beyond the purely personal and mundane; he swims in a river of movement that refreshes his spirit. (1999c)

and even more directly: '[w]e no longer know it, but there was a time when movement was our language' (Whitehouse 1999b, p.33).

Or Hannah McClure, in her study on realization of the heart in Mevlevi *sema*: '[f]or my study kinaesthesia is chosen as the prominent sense through which all experience is seen to be accessed. It is the prominent modality of knowing [...]' (2015, p. 65).

Is conscious movement then, not only potentially the most honest, direct route to feeling, but an express train to the divine?

In the 1950s, Mary Starks Whitehouse began to find a 'new' way to dance than either the one she had been trained in, or the training dancers usually follow<sup>2</sup> – the learning of choreographies and training the body up to the point it can accomplish the movements in mind that a choreographer asks for. At its beginnings, there was no name for this method, but what would eventually be called 'Authentic Movement' was based on the listening described above:

[a]n authentic movement is in and of the Self at the moment it is done. Nothing is in it that is not inevitable, simple [...] When I see someone move authentically, it is so real that it is undiluted by any pretense or any appearance or images. (Whitehouse 1999a)

In Authentic Movement, the body becomes the material with which the unconscious expresses itself:

[a]gain and again the physical action takes a form which would not be possible at will or which would take a long time to learn by conscious intention. (Whitehouse 1999b)

This was certainly the case in my explorations with movement. I was just going out and creating things I had no idea my body could do. If someone had asked me to do the same prescribed movements, they would have taken much longer to learn than they took to create.

But as Whitehouse says:

[f]or people who don't want to become dancers, it is the feeling of dancing that counts, not the discovery of what their bodies cannot do but what they can do, what is naturally available to them [...] of the joy and the rhythm and energy that is their rightful heritage. (1999a)

Even so great a dervish as Mevlâna's *dost* and master Shams i-Tabriz seems to have had experienced this, as he expresses humorously in the following passage:

[w]ith such a love, the Companion with His hot state seized me in the *Sama*. He was turning me around like a little bird [...] Now, God forbid, if you had brought a prostitute from the tavern – I was dancing 100 times more quickly and skillfully [...] When a sincere man begins to dance, the seven heavens, the earth, and all creatures begin to dance. (Chittick 2004)

In Sufism, the point is, of course, never about the level of skill in motion, but the subject's relation to the divine. With Whitehouse it is about finding feeling, and the Self:

[a]s long as the body can be regarded as an object to be trained, controlled or manipulated, one need not experience these things [...] but when it is somehow myself, impelled by impulses, feelings and inward demands for action waiting to be perceived and allowed, I am suddenly aware of being differently alive, differently conscious of myself. (1999a)

Experience of new quality of movement 'provides a change in feeling, another dimension of the self. So movement can lead to a new feeling; feeling can lead to a new movement. They are, in some way, one' (Whitehouse 1999b, p. 60).

But 'Authentic Movement' and self-discovery require discipline to let go of our ego's ordinary, thought-based desiring. The key word is 'Authentic', meaning that one is listening within, as accomplished through non-action in action, and action in non-action:

[t]he ego learns slowly an attitude toward what wants it moving, not to act while the action is going on [...] Shrunk to the size of ego, movement appears as inhibition, self-consciousness, poverty of gesture [...] the openness of attitude allows the totality and, therefore, the body to function freely, producing much more of the natural range of physical action. An early

discovery in class or private work is that will power and effort impede movement. One has to ‘let it happen’ as contrasted to ‘doing it’. (Whitehouse 1999c)

Like Jung’s active imagination, then, or meditation, Authentic Movement is a discipline that requires a degree of letting go of conscious control, in order to accept and manifest movements directly from the unconscious: the Self’s desires inscribed in the moment with the body.

### ***Staging total theatre in music***

#### *Say I am You*

When writing *Mevlâna-Say I am You* (Ellison 2013), I rejected the notion of a planned *sema*, which would have not only been historically inaccurate, but completely counterintuitive, given what we know of Rumi’s *sema* practice (Lewis 2007). While moving in a ritualized or codified way certainly has its value, and while the gestures themselves in Veled’s Mevlevi *sema* may well open the devotee to new experience, I could not possibly see that a fixed ritual could be the end all – in fact I was completely uninterested in this direction. Though whatever staging is used for *Say I am You* depends on making a distinction between seen and Unseen worlds, rather than any historical depiction, the element of spontaneity in Mevlâna’s original is the primary sense I was trying to catch. My piece as a whole, given its emphasis on the

necessary pain of separation and of self being ‘burnt’ by the beloved before Unity, is based on an awareness that the process of surrender in *sema* is presented as anything but easy by Rumi:

Semâ nedir biliyormusun? Beli (evet) sesini isitmek; kendinden kopmak ve O’na kavusmaktır.

Semâ nedir biliyormusun? Varlıktan habersiz olmak ve mutlak fânîlik içinde beka zevkini tatmaktır. (Yöndemli 1997)<sup>3</sup>

Also, as I was trying to relate the essence of Mevlâna’s relationship to Shams-i Tabriz through poetry, *sema* was, though important, only one aspect to Mevlâna’s makeup. But where, at the end of Tableau 7, a spontaneous *Zıkr* or *sema* begins to honour Shams’ return to Konya, the central lines are perhaps the most beautiful of all that Mevlâna has written on *sema*:

The creatures are set in motion by love  
love of God in all eternity  
wind dances because of the trees  
The trees because of the wind  
When you enter the dance  
You leave both worlds behind.  
The world of the dance  
moves around heaven and earth

It is impossible not to pause briefly here and compare these words again with those of Whitehouse, who writes in her *Tao of the body*:

[m]ovement is the great law of life. Everything moves. The heavens move, the earth turns, the great tides mount the beaches of the world. The clouds march slowly across the sky, driven by a wind that stirs the trees into a dance of branches. Water, rising in mountain springs, runs down the slopes [...].  
(1999a)

The dramatic structure of *Say I am You* puts the *sema* – here actually more a collective *zîkr* or *remembrance* at least in its musical contents – at a critical point in the drama. Mevlâna and Shams' *sohbet* is contextualized into the hotbed of jealousy that surrounded them in the Selçuk capital of Konya, as Mevlâna's followers and especially son Allaudin neither understand the *sema*, nor its ecstasy, nor indeed any sense of the meaning of the two mystics' Friend-ship. Yet, at least according to Romain Bischoff of co-producing VocaalLAB, *Say I am You*'s Tableau 7 is the most strikingly effective of the whole opera: slung like an arrow directly out of the contemplative Tableau 6, and painted in one swift, broad brush stroke (Fast-Slow-Fast) from beginning to end. At the end of Tableau 7, as the *zîkr* reaches fever pitch over a groove of bendirs and rhythmic chanting of the names of God in ever-increasing intensity, the key point in the drama is also reached and Shams is abducted. Here is the full libretto of the section – with initial chanting of names of God continuing throughout<sup>4</sup>:



**Please insert photo: Figure 2:** *Say I am You*, Tableau 7 (Score). June 24, 2012,  
Istanbul: Istanbul Music Festival. Copyright 2012 Michael Ellison.

Chorus (students): Hu! Hu! Allah Hu! Hu! Hu! Allah Hu! Hu [...]

Veled:

Don't be bitter my brother  
hold to your togetherness  
or surely you'll scatter

Chorus (students): Hu! Hu! Allah Hu! Hu Hu, Mevla Hu [...]

Shams:

The creatures are set in motion by love

Mevlana:

Love of God in all eternity

Shams:

The wind dances because of the trees

Mevlana:

The trees because of the wind

Shams:

When you enter the dance  
You leave both worlds behind.

The world of the dance  
moves around heaven and earth

Chorus (students): Hu! Hu! Allah Hu! Hu Hu, Mevla Hu [...]

Veled:

Don't be bitter my brother  
Hold to your togetherness or surely you'll scatter

Shams:

Look at the one split open with jealousy!  
This time if I go, I'll never return.  
I'll disappear so  
that none will know where I've gone to or am  
You'll all fail in your efforts to find me  
Never will you find the slightest clue  
As the years will go by, me vanished in thin air,  
Many will say  
'Surely he was slain by some foe's hand'.

Chorus (students): Il'lallah! Il'lallah!

*(End Tableau 7).* (Ellison 2013)

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**Please insert photo: Figure 3:** *Say I am You*, 2012. Gunnar Brandt Sigurdsson as Shams-i Tabriz. June 24, 2012, Istanbul: Istanbul Music Festival. Copyright 2012 Michael Ellison. Photo: H. Yılmaz Ulus.

Other Tableaux in *Say I am You* are also conceived with the movement of dancers, in particular the recurring *Mystical Event Frames* in which we leap from ‘this world’ to the Unseen world:

The unseen (chorus)\* (*whispering, ppp, dancers swirling, crawling around stage*)

Your veil is everything I make manifest

Your veil is everything I keep secret

Your veil is everything I affirm

Your veil is everything I obliterate, and

Your veil is what I unveil, just as your veil is what I  
curtain.(Ellison 2012)

Due to limitations on funding, *Say I am You*’s premieres at Rotterdam Operadagen and Istanbul Music Festival in early and late June 2012 were performed *concertante* – without staging – though a video providing surtitles of its text was given above. In performance, contemporary resonances of Shams’ character are most striking: he is the outsider or immigrant, a unjustly feared and despised dervish, who turns the status quo upside down and is misunderstood by everyone except Mevlâna – his otherness emphasized vocally by his Azeri *Mugam* voice, with its extraordinary range and

timbres, in contrast to the rest of the group's western or Turkish *makam* sounds. The work awaits an inventive stage director and choreographer who understand the centrality of Seen and Unseen, and the importance of movement throughout the work; together with the notion that its mosaic-narrative outline is intended to occur in the present moment, animated by the beauty of its exquisite poetic structures and movements onstage to mirror movements of the soul.

**Please insert photo: Figure 4:** *Say I am You*, Aya Irini, Istanbul, 2012. Mevlâna's students. June 24, 2012, Istanbul: Istanbul Music Festival. Copyright 2012 Michael Ellison. Photo: H. Yılmaz Ulus.

### **Deniz Küstü (*The Sea-Crossed Fisherman*)**

My second opera, *Deniz Küstü (The Sea-Crossed Fisherman)* based on the proto-environmentalist novel of Yaşar Kemal from 1978, deals with slaughter of dolphins in the Bosphorus in the 1960s, an event that actually occurred. Though Kemal's protagonist Selim is more pantheist in his outlook than Sufi, *Deniz Küstü* brings the idea of *sema* into its second scene, the crucial moment in this catastrophe. Connotations Kemal includes in the text that 'the dolphin is holy' the fact that the name of the dolphin in Turkish, Yunus, is the same as the prophet Jonah, 'who kept him in his belly 40 days and 40 nights' (Jones 2016), in addition to all the moral factors involved, invite this. They also help us to see the killing of dolphins for their oil to sell to western freighters waiting in the port as a crime bordering on sacrilege. While we open Scene 2 with the Selim and a swordfish on the Sea of Marmara,

followed by joyful sections where his dolphin friends appear, their ensuing slaughter is marked in the score of Scene 2 a ‘*sema* of death’, with similar bendir rhythms to those used in the Mevlevi Ayın’s *saz semaisi* – frame the dystopian action (Ellison 2016).

**Please insert photo: Figure 5:** *Deniz Küstü*, June 2016. Scene 4, Selim and Swordfish. June 11, 2016, Istanbul: Istanbul Music Festival. Copyright 2016 Michael Ellison. Photo: Tony Judge.

Nature and City take turns in this magical realist vision of Yaşar Kemal. Unlike *Say I am You*, *Deniz Küstü*’s staging element was fully realized for its premiere at the Istanbul Music Festival at Süreyya Opera House in Kadıköy, in June 2016. Although ostensibly opera (it uses five opera singers), *Deniz Küstü* is most accurately described as a ‘Total Theatre in Music’ or ‘Total Music Theatre’, because the elements of Music, dance, staging and video performance share the stage equally.

**Please insert photo: Figure 6:** *Deniz Küstü*. Scene 4, Selim and Zeynel. June 11, 2016, Istanbul: Istanbul Music Festival. Copyright 2016 Michael Ellison. Photo: Tony Judge.

Choreography is inseparable from libretto, and director Simon Jones<sup>5</sup> and I worked throughout the creation process with Turkey’s top choreographer, the former Martha Graham Dance Company dancer, Zeynep Tanbay. Though a choreographer herself who mainly used contemporary music of different sorts, Zeynep was used to a high

degree of control over productions, and had never worked with commissioned music being newly written for her dancers. As a result, when added to the already contemporary nature of my music – Turkish influences notwithstanding – this new experience was full of challenges. While I was able to provide Zeynep recordings of Hezarfen Ensemble performing sections of the work-in-progress in advance to allow her to begin its choreography, the lack of singers (their parts were played by instruments), on these recordings drove Zeynep, very unusually, away from listening to the music in the early stages to a riskier process of creating movements she hoped would eventually fit.

**Please insert photo: Figure 7:** *Deniz Küstü*. Scene 3, The Eagle. June 11, 2016, Istanbul: Istanbul Music Festival. Copyright 2016 Michael Ellison. Photo: Tony Judge.

After explaining what she planned to do, she simply wrote ‘I hope this works’, in one email (Ellison and Tanbay 2016). *Deniz Küstü* is thus not only an ambitious example of a sincere attempt at a collaborative total artwork, but also raises the fascinating question (since the opera’s first run received stellar reviews from all quarters) of how it worked to have music and choreography separately rehearsed – with no music whatsoever used in the production’s early dance rehearsals – before coming together. What became clear to Zeynep and me in our post-production discussions, when I interviewed her especially for this article, was that one *Ur-gesture* we had was in some cases simply the idea of dolphins, as well as sometimes the character of the dance and music demanded from Jones’ libretto of both of us.

**Please insert photo: Figure 8:** *Deniz Küstü*. Scene 2, Selim and his Dolphin. June 11, 2016, Istanbul: Istanbul Music Festival. Copyright 2016 Michael Ellison. Photo: Taraf.

Here I quote the most salient excerpts of the interview.

**V. Zeynep Tanbay (ZT) interview** (excerpts): 6 January 2017, Kahvedan Café, Cihangir, Istanbul.

**ZT:** One interesting thing I remember, when you sent the first e-mail of the music, is that I started to listen to it, looking at the libretto that I had gone through with Simon [...] I'm looking at this, listening to the music, and there is someone talking, and I said, 'wait a minute, where's the singing? I don't understand'. Later on I realized that actually there was no singer, that this person was just reading the words over the music to show when it starts and when it ends.

**ME:** *So that you could see where in the text the music was.*

**ZT:** It took me a long time to understand that situation, and I said, 'this is going to be *more* difficult than I thought'. I didn't understand *anything*, so I said, 'Ok, I'm not going to listen to the music; I'm just going to go to the studio, find movements for the libretto that I worked through with Simon, and just make a laboratory for movement'.

**ME:** *Yes. So how did you do that? That's really interesting [...]*

**ZT:** Well actually this is how I decided to do it. As you may know, in the USA, Merce Cunningham and John Cage were a famous duo, with John Cage's music and Merce Cunningham's choreography. What we know is that Cunningham did the choreography without listening to the music. And that Merce Cunningham's dancers would hear the music for the first time onstage, on the Gala night, at the first performance!

**ME:** *Right.*

**ZT:** They never knew the music before. This method, to me, was extremely contemporary. Because, as you said, when you think of your music, you were moving. That's exactly how it is for me also: when I think of movements, I think of the music – together. I can never do something *against* the music, or as though the music doesn't exist. But this time I said to the dancers – who know me very well and that I choreograph something for every note, almost – that this was going to be a different project. That it is going to be a Merce Cunningham-John Cage version. And they said, 'what?! We don't have any music?'

**ME:** *So they didn't hear anything?*

**ZT:** No. That's how we started to work. But one part I'll never forget was very important – when we met at MIAM with Simon and went through the libretto. From that I knew every character, and what Simon wanted from every character; what kind of movements or shapes he wanted. So we did talk together about those things. I had



suggestions, and he had ideas, and he liked my ideas. For example, for Zeynel, he wanted movements like a cartoon character. Zeynel has movements that are jerky – not very human, more like a cartoon. For me, that gave Zeynel, who was one of the [fishing] villagers something very different in his body language. It made him totally different from the other villagers. And the same with the dolphins. I found the movements.

***ME:** Yes, this is very interesting to me, because I could see a little bit the evolution of it, but [...]*

**ZT:** Yes, I didn't use the music. When we were rehearsing it was like a laboratory. I give [the dancers] this first shape of a dolphin, it's this diving movement [makes swooping diving motion from above]. And I also found these arm motions – let's make a movement for the dolphins where in which almost all the movements your arms should be moving like that, behind or attached. I imagined a dolphin's body, when the whole body makes this oval movement – I always thought of this shape, and the diving – and also the togetherness. There were movements where I wanted the dancers to make these together. You know how not only dolphins but also schools of fish in the sea are going along and then suddenly – 'whit!' they turn a completely different direction, but all together. Same thing for flocks of birds. I wanted it exactly like this, that the whole motion unexpectedly turns a new direction.

**Please insert photo: Figure 9:** *Deniz Küstü*, April 2016. First week of rehearsal. April, 2016, Dolapdere, Istanbul. Copyright 2016 Michael Ellison. Photo: Amanda Bayley.

**ME:** *The dolphins' music is a real dance, and it is very rhythmic with its music. It is complex rhythmically also. Had you heard any of this music when you started choreographing the dolphins' section?*

**ZT:** No. But, the moment the music was sent to me, we said 'the dolphin music starts here', thanks to the first rehearsal period in April we did, where Simon [finally] told me *this* is where the first entrance is of the dolphins is, *this* is the second entrance [...]

**ME:** *With the musicians there.*

**ZT:** Yes, it was there that I fixed it, and we had the recording of that day after you gave it to us. After that, I really did choreograph to the music. For example the '*i-u, i-u*' (*sings flute gesture in top of the dolphins tutti section*), that was beautiful. So I already had the movements; I also had the choreography, but at this stage sometimes I had to 'break' the original choreography to fit it to the music. For example, let's say the dancers enter with a small diving motion from the back corner. And then this '*i-u, i-u*' gesture comes. They could not continue like that. They had six counts (Ellison and Jones 2016, at 20:40), and then dive, dive. But your gesture was coming after, let's say four. So I took off the two extra beats that they had to dive in. I had to really adjust it to the music – because I wanted those points together.

**ME:** *That's very interesting, and I could see that happening, because it was changing before our eyes. And I remember in April some things seemed to work very well, but*

*then other things I remember jumping up and saying, 'No, no, we can't have that!'*  
*But I'm sure you were feeling all of this, and a lot more [...]*

**ZT:** Yes – this is the thing. Suddenly, we hear your music, which we know almost as well as you do, as the composer, but we look to different elements. For me, as the choreographer, I say ‘at those (flute gestures)’, but you might say, *what are you talking about?* Because for you, you have this and that instrument going on, and all these other layers to think about. But this is how it went. You gave us the music, and we started to choreograph for that. This was the most difficult part. It became [...] (taps a slow, steady beat). And then I tell them, ‘do you know, where you hear this “dinggg?” That’s exactly where I want you to do that jump’. Then the jump I make happen in such a way that it comes exactly out of the movements before. Now it’s counted so that the jump now comes on ‘dinggg’. There’s going to be no way to miss it.

As a choreographer, you make the dance for the music, the way you want. So you emphasize either something in that part, or this part of the music, or one feeling of the music. You have to choose. Many times, I say to the dancers, ‘you walk in and you have [this musical gesture]’ [...] They enter; the music starts (sings long note for dolphins section opening). I’d like you to be there one day to see us. Do you know how many times we have to rehearse only that part, because we have only (sings very long note and then flute gesture). And it only comes here (again sings long note), not after any gesture. And they *have* to hear it the way I’m hearing it. That’s another difficulty. It’s like a conductor who wants it a certain way. In the end the musicians have to go with how the conductor does it. It sometimes takes a whole rehearsal only

to fix that: '[n]o, I want it *exactly* in here. You come early, there, no'. But say the dancer turns 'but I'm in the same time with Sara!' I say, '[n]o, it has to be the way Can does it', for example. It takes so much rehearsal time to get them to hear the same way, feel the same way, do the movements the same way. And this feeling must be the same for each dancer.

*ME: One of the really interesting things here is that you're adjusting things that must go together with the gesture, because you've put it in, and maybe cut in, or shortened, or made the rest to fit. But on the other hand, what about – and it relates to the first question – so you made this choreography initially without having the music, and then you did have a recording of the music – but most of it works already actually, right-before having the exact music?*

**ZT:** Yes, it's true. But you know, you have the idea of the music. You'd sent it to me, and I said 'what is that woman talking there; this is going to be difficult – I'd better not listen to it, because then I'll get confused'. So I just stopped and made my material separately.

*MT: But you had still heard some of the music.*

**ZT:** Yes, somehow, I have an idea of it. Even if I don't want to listen to it in order not to be confused, I at least know what kind of music it is. I know it's not going to be Vivaldi, right? So I'm ready for it, and for the feeling of it. And then in my laboratory I work the movements, I find versions for the dolphins, and I ask the dancers, 'Ok-what more can you make from this?' Some of the dancers are more inventive, and I

have this feeling: 'Keep it, I like that'. We, as I say, 'sew it' together, with the other materials. Then, when I have the music, as I told you, I adjust it to the music. I reshape it a little. Imagine a sculpture (*heykel*). First you do it, make it and then at the very end you take off a little side here, and the neck becomes a little smaller, and this a little longer there. You put the last touch. So that's what its like. When I heard your music finally exactly the way it was supposed to be (with singers), then I said, 'now we are going to time the movements exactly this way'.

***ME:** What's interesting is that it sounds like you come in with a strong idea, but its not totally defined. They're improvising with the directions you're giving them, and then you say 'keep that, but let's not do that'.*

**ZT:** Yes, something like this: 'you enter from the right corner, with four diving motions. And then you will go together to the school of dolphins to this side, and then you will come forward with this. And then we do the movements. Suddenly, when I hear the little changes in the music, I say "wait!"' 'Don't do that movement so fast, because you come here early'. Because, for me, in that place I have to do the next movement exactly with the music.

Also, imagine: you're conceiving music for dolphins, and I'm conceiving movements for dolphins. So somehow, we're not so far away from each other. Its not like I'm making a dance for a lion, and you're thinking of dolphins! So if you ask, 'how come it's well suited?' It's not so strange. We are both working in the water, with the water [...]

**ME:** *and the sea [...]*

**ZT:** There's so much common material we have, actually. They meet, and then reshape the last steps as a kind of adjustment to create the harmony together.

**MT:** *Maybe our Ur-gesture was the dolphins, or the idea of dolphins.*

**ZT:** Yes, I think that's it. When you say 'dolphins' the 'Ur' of dolphins is like the [movement] of dolphins. Maybe [also] the happiness and the joy of moving together, those kind of things. And then suddenly the sadness, the massacre.

**ME:** *It just reminds me that when I was writing the music, I had this image in my mind, but it was like looking at the surface of the water. You would see something way down beneath the surface [...] and then suddenly it would come out and disappear again. It's actually from Selim's point of view. So they would come out; whereas on a stage of course the dancers are 'out there' the whole time. So we have these slightly different views. No one sees how I imagined it.*

**ZT:** Of course.

**ME:** *In a way the dynamics of the music do this, though.*

**ZT:** Maybe there, the person you should have been working with the most would have been Simon. You have to be one with him. Sometimes I felt like there were different ideas or expectations.

*ME: Did he say very much about the dolphins?*

**ZT:** No, except: first entrance, they're happy; that was clear. The second entrance they are still, but feelings are changing. And then they are in the massacre. So those ideas were making my movements totally different. Depending on when they were on the floor the movements were totally different for the dancers.

*ME: Of course the text is driving that. So I could see that too.*

## **Conclusion**

The idea of dolphins and their motions as *Ur-gesture* in the Total Music Theatre *Deniz Küstü* is intriguing. There is, of course, a difference, since we are describing two distinct creative parties, choreographer and composer, who work separately fixing rhythms and motions out of that idea, and then adjusting (in this case the movements) to come together. What I, as composer 'saw' in my head while writing I never thought to tell Simon Jones or Zeynep Tanbay about, who were free to go in their own directions. Yet this image was something I told the musicians about in rehearsals, in order to get them to pay especial attention to the surges in motion in dynamics and texture shifts.

Of course, had I explained to Zeynep my inner visual image, it would have been impossible anyway, as I was 'seeing' dolphins, not dancers! And to have the deliberate stylization Simon Jones wrote into the libretto of having dancers enact dolphins on the stage is ultimately much more intriguing. Through the vulnerable

humanity of the dancers' bodies, implications in the text of the dolphins' near-humanness were accentuated. 'To kill a dolphin is worse than killing a man [...]. Don't call him an animal' and so on (Jones 2016). Thus the transposition of medium arguably makes poetic and even intensifies the vision of Yaşar Kemal's novel. It is worth pointing out that this was one of Zeynep's favourite novels as well. She knew the source and its quality and feeling even before working with director/librettist Jones. On the other hand, she was – of necessity working very much from the professional choreographer's point of view, albeit with the notion that her dancers could and would embellish and enrich her basic choreographies.

In that sense her dancers were, as Whitehouse describes, 'trying to expand the body's limits' more than acting as a vehicle for their own Self-expression, though one would hope for dancers' sake that these are not mutually exclusive. The process Whitehouse describes in 'Authentic Movement', of someone simply expressing their Self—and actually – human existence as this person in this time and in this moment, not as a choreographed work, does however get back to the notion of movement and dance as humanity's birthright and one of its most fundamental expressions. Someone who is expressing that human existence through movement, whether in a therapeutic or 'Active Imagination' context, as a composer trying to 'find' music, or a dervish spontaneously whirling in response to a Blacksmith's hammer that connects him or her to a divine sound within, are dancing within the body's limits, while opening new vistas for the Soul. No one cares what it looks like – the witness so advocated by Janet Adler (1999) would only for its expression. The inner listening is the thing. Yet as Whitehouse said, any motion enacted under such an impulse, amateur or not, will have an unmistakable ring of *authenticity*, as non-dancers thus inspired nevertheless



find movements that would take weeks to be taught, but more importantly new areas of their own existence by moving in response to some inner *Ur-gesture*. A direct call to creative depths, to Self – bypassing any words or outside impetus. Or, as Mevlâna might say, beyond dualities of conception, to Union.

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## Contributor details

Singing melody, a propulsive, yet mercurial sense of rhythm, large-scale harmonic control, and above all a keen dramatic bent characterize Michael Ellison's work, which seamlessly integrates traditional (especially Turkish and western) and contemporary sensibilities. Ellison's first opera, *Mevlana-Say I am You* (Rotterdam Operadagen and Istanbul Music Festivals, 2012) broke new ground for contemporary music, achieving an unprecedented level of integration of Turkish traditional instruments – a direction his second opera, *Deniz Küstü* (Istanbul Music Festival, 2016, Jones/Tanbay/NOHlab) extends. Ellison has been commissioned by BBC Symphony, Radio France, Berlin Saxophone Quartet, Grenoble Festival, New York Youth Symphony and New Music Southwest (UK), amongst many others. He is also principal investigator on the five-year, Bristol-based European Research Council project *Beyond East and West: Developing and Documenting an Evolving Transcultural Musical Practice*, and is co-director of Hezarfen Ensemble.

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Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Total work of art.

<sup>2</sup> Martha Graham: '[i]t takes ten years to make a dancer' (1991).

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<sup>3</sup> ‘[d]o you know what Sema is? To hear his voice, drift apart from yourself and reunite with him. Do you know what Sema is? Being unaware of being, to taste the joy of immortality within ultimate mortality’.

<sup>4</sup> This can be heard in its entirety on *Métier* (CD), MSV28539, Track 6.

<sup>5</sup> In the United Kingdom Simon Jones regularly works with a choreographer with his company Bodies in Flight.